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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000693

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OSD FOR APSA SHINN/SEDNEY/HILL/BASALLA; USFJ FOR
J00/J01/J2/J5

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [CH](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: TAIWAN CONTINGENCY: NO "AUTOMATIC" JAPANESE SUPPORT

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

11. (C) Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura and other senior officials underscored publicly on March 13 that a Taiwan Strait contingency will not "automatically" invoke the Japanese legislation governing rear area support for U.S. forces. These senior-level comments -- the most unequivocal to date on the Japanese Government's position in regard to a Taiwan Strait contingency -- were made in response to same day press reports that Ministry of Defense (MOD) Defense Policy Bureau Director General Takamizawa had told a ruling party gathering that a Taiwan Strait contingency can invoke the Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan (SIASJ law). Contacts at the Ministry of Defense (MOD) believe that pro-China ruling party members had "tricked" Takamizawa into making these sensitive remarks on the Taiwan Strait issue. End Summary.

Rear Area Support Law "Not Automatically Applied"

12. (C) The Japanese press reported on March 13 that MOD Defense Policy Bureau Director General Nobushige Takamizawa had suggested during a meeting of the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Research Committee on Security Issues that the Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan in Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan (SIASJ law) will be invoked in the event of a contingency in the Taiwan Strait. In the most senior and unequivocal comments to date on Japan's position in the event of this contingency, Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura clarified during a subsequent press conference that "a situation involving Taiwan does not mean that the SIASJ law will be applied automatically at all." Senior LDP Diet member and drafter of the 1999 law Taku Yamasaki said separately that "strategic ambiguity is what is most required in such a situation." Administrative Vice Minister of Defense Masuda also held a press conference the same evening, stating emphatically that the Japanese government's position on the issue remains unchanged -- that the concept of a contingency in areas around Japan is not

geographic, but situational. Finally, Takamizawa also stated to the press that his remarks were taken out of context and apologized for any misunderstanding.

¶3. (C) MOD contacts stress that the press and some members of the Diet had "mischaracterized" Takamizawa's remarks. According to MOD Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation Division Deputy Director Kyosuke Matsumoto, Takamizawa was responding to a question from an LDP Diet member whether the SIASJ law will apply in a Taiwan Straits contingency. He explained that Japan would "step up surveillance in the area and tighten security measures in such event." Takamizawa did not, however, mention directly the SIASJ law, Matsumoto said.

¶4. (C) Matsumoto asserted that Takamizawa appears to have been "set up" by pro-China members of the LDP, including Rep. Koichi Kato, whom he believes had leaked Takamizawa's comments to the press. Thanks in large part to immediate actions to mitigate the situation by Machimura, Masuda, and Takamizawa himself, Matsumoto said he does not believe the issue will create serious problems for Takamizawa or MOD.

¶5. (S) Comment: Since passage in 1999 of the "Law Concerning Measures to Ensure the Peace and Security of Japan," there have been numerous assurances from Japanese defense and MOFA officials that SIASJ would be invoked in the event of a PRC attack on Taiwan and, most importantly, Japan would: (1) allow U.S. forces to mount operations from basis in Japan and (2) supply rear area and logistics support to U.S. forces engaged in a conflict. The need to maintain "strategic ambiguity" qualifies this commitment, however. In effect, it is a "soft" promise that may or may not be kept depending on the political situation in Japan or on who Japanese leaders

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and policymakers are at the time. End Comment.
SCHIEFFER